RAJYA SABHA

'sday, the 1st August, 1995/
10th Sravana, 1917 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the ock, Mr. Chairman *in the Chair.*

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Investments Made by LIC

*21. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU:† DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) What are the names of the companies in which LIC has made investments by purchasing shares or debentures by private placement during the last two years, including the amount invested in each company;

(b) what is the criterion for making investment by such private placement;

(c) what are the names of the companies whose shares were purchased by LIC on the stock market during the same period and what is the amount involved;

(d) what are the names of the companies whose shares value had dropped after such purchases were made; and

(e) what is the criterion for making such investment decisions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY): (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is a long term investor in the capital market and does not indulge in speculation. As per the guidelines issued by the Government for the deployment of funds, LIC is required to invest not less than 75% of its accretion to the controlled fund every year in directed investments in the Socially Oriented Sector. Not more than 25% of the funds are available for investment in private sector, loans to policyholders, construction and acquisition of immovable property etc.

Under section 19(2) of the LIC Act 1956, the LIC may constitute an Investment Committee to advise in matters relating to the investments of its funds. The Investment Committee constituted by the LIC consists of the Chairman and one of its Managing Directors, and the Chairman of Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI), Unit Trust of India (UTI), and General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC). the Investment Committee evaluates the proposals on the basis of track record of the companies, LIC's existing stake, growth potential, debt-equity ratio, yield on investment, market price, interest and assets cover and the Corporate history of the company.

During the period 1.4.1993 to 31.3.1995 LIC made investments by way of private placement in (a) equity shares in respect of 10 companies to the extent of Rs. 134.84 crores. and (b) debentures in respect of 35 companies to the extent of Rs. 225.65 crores of which an amount of Rs. 188.60 crores was disbursed. The requisite information is enclosed in statement (i), (ii) and (iii) (*See* below)

The LIC during this period has purchased equity shares of 192 companies at a total cost of Rs. 647.14 crores. share price of 118 companies dropped as compared to average purchase price during this period, the requisite information is at Annexure [*See* Appendix 174, Annexure No 8] However, such fluctuations do not in the long run adversely affect the equity portfolio of the LIC. The total book value of LIC investment in the equity portfolio as on 31.3.1995 is Rs. 3173.84 crores as against its market value of Rs. 12424.32 crores. From time to time LIC books profit by selling a part of its equity holding. The benefit of profit so realised is passed on the policyholders in the form of bonus.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Rajni Ranjan Sahu.

Statement (i)
Private Placement of Equity shares 1.4.1993 to 31.3.1995
(*Rs. in crores*)

S. No.	Name of the Company	LIC participation
1.	Punjab Wireless systems Ltd.	3.60
2.	The Tinplate Company India Ltd.	2.00
3.	JBF Industries Ltd.	10.40
4.	Reliance Inds. Ltd.	100.00
5.	PVD Plast Mould Inds. Ltd.	1.20
6.	Caprihans India Ltd.	3.64
7.	Mangalam Cement Ltd.	4.25
8.	Mukund Ltd.	6.50
9.	Pharmaceutical Products of India Ltd.	2.00
10.	REPL Engineering Ltd.	1.25
		134.84

Statement (ii)
Private Placement of Debentures for Long Term Working Capital Requirements 1.04.1993 to 31.03.1995
(*Rs. in crores*)

Sr. No.	Name of the Company	LIC's participation
1.	The Assam Co. Ltd.	2.00
2.	Jay Shree Tea & Inds. Ltd	4.00
3.	Upper Ganges Sugar & Industries Ltd.	2.00
4.	Jaiprakash Inds. Ltd	4.00
5.	Jain Irrigation Systems Ltd.	2.00
6.	Chhatar Chemicals Ltd.	1.00
7.	Videocon Appliances Ltd.	5.00
8.	IFB Industries Ltd.	1.00
9.	Modern Woollens Ltd.	1.00
10.	Govind Rubber Ltd.	1.00
11.	TISCO	8.00
12.	Lloyds Steel Inds. Ltd.	2.00
13.	Modern Suitings Ltd.	1.00
14.	Century Textiles & Inds. Ltd.	25.00
15.	Dalmia Cements Ltd.	4.00
16.	Transport Corpn. of India Ltd.	1.00
17.	Dewan rubber Inds. Ltd.	1.00
18.	ATV Projects Ltd.	2.00
19.	Kirloskar electric Co. Ltd.	2.50
20.	HMG Industries Ltd.	1.00
21.	MAC Industries Ltd,	0.50
22.	Polar Industries Ltd.	0.50
23.	Rajinder Steels Ltd.	3.00
24.	Shree Cement Ltd.	4.00
25.	Hardia Steel Ltd.	5.00
26.	Nicco Corporation Ltd.	3.00
		87.00

Statement (iii)
Private Placement of Debentures for Projects (1.4.1993 to 31.3.1995)
(*Rs. in crores*)

Sr. No.	Name of the Company	LIC participation
1.	Nova Iron & Steel Ltd.	10.35
2.	Grasim Industries Ltd.	25.00
3.	Atash Industries Ltd.	4.00
4.	Usha Udyog Ltd.	4.00
5.	Malvika Steel Products Ltd.	70.00
6.	Lanco Ferro Ltd.	2.80
7.	Dalmia Cement Ltd.	7.50
8.	REPL Engineering Ltd.	10.00
9.	Onida Savak Ltd.	5.00
		138.75

SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Mr. Chairman, Sir, before I come to the question, I would like to remind the hon. Finance Minister of his predecessor in 1956. The then Finance Minister said on 29.2.1956 and I quote:

> "It will be possible to spread the message of insurance as far and wide as possible reaching out

beyond the more advanced urban areas and into hitherto neglected, namely, rural areas."

Sir, then also emphasis had been laid on group insurance. I think the spirit of 1956 to cover the economically and socially backward sections, a Group Insurance Scheme for the landless agriculturists and a Group Insurance Scheme for the beneficiaries under the Integrated Rural Development Programme, is being eroded. I would like to remind the hon. Finance Minister that prior to 1950, the funds of LIC were being misused for speculation. The LIC was to hold 55% of its assets in Government or other approved securities and the remaining 45% was left to the discretion of the insurers. No doubt, since the concept has changed and from 1958 the investment pattern has also changed and certain restrictions on investment are imposed.

In the annexure which he has given along with the answer, it is shown that out of Rs. 134 crores invested in equities, Rs. 100 crores have been invested in one firm.

I would like to know from the hon. Finance Minister, through you, Sir, (a) what the mechanism is. Why have Rs. 100 crores, out of Rs. 134 crores, been invested in one company? (b) I would like to know whether he will assure the house that the funds of the LIC will not be used for speculative purposes. (c) I would like to know whether there is any intention to denationalise the insurance sector. I would like to have categorical answers on these three counts.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the investment policy of the Life Insurance Corporation is laid down in accordance with the guidelines approved by the Government. In terms of these guidelines, nearly 75% of the total accretion to the Controlled Fund of the LIC has to be invested in socially-oriented sectors.

It is only the remaining 25 per cent of the accretion to the control fund which has to be invested in the private sector for enhancing loans to the policy holders.

Since the nationalisation of the Life Insurance Corporation, the Government has laid down guidelines which, I believe, ensure that these funds will be used to promote the interest of LIC consistent with the national social and economic objectives. The hon. Member has raised a specific question about investment in a particular company. I would like to inform the House, through you, that these decisions are taken by the Investment Committee of the Life Insurance Corporation on which, apart from the Chairman and the managing Director of the LIC, there are representatives of other financial institutions. It is not the Government which takes these decisions. What I have learnt from the LIC is that the LIC follows the policies to maximise, optimise, yield for policy-holders subject to security of funds. They do not speculate; they are long-term investors. The main criteria for selecting a firm to invest in are financial performance—return on investments, future prospects of financial performance, and limiting it to the extent necessary for considerations. As far as the specific firm that the hon. Member has pointed out is concerned, I would like to say that out of the total corporate sector investments of the LIC, this particular group accounts for only 2.62 per cent which is not very large. At the top of the list is the LIC Housing Finance Company with 13.68 per cent, the ICICI with 7.90 per cent, the IDBI with 5.38 per cent, the IFCI with 4 per cent, the MTNL with 3.27 per cent, the Rashtriya Ispat with 3.05 per cent, TISCO with 2.70 per cent and Reliance comes below this. I think, taking into account the total corporate investment of the LIC, this is not considered by the LIC as a

disproportionate amount of investment in this particular company. As far as the third question regarding nationalisation is concerned, insurance industry in our country is in the nationalised sector. Until and unless the nationalisation law is repealed, there is no question of denationalising this industry.

SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Sir, I have not got the reply. I specifically wanted to know whether the funds of the LIC are going to be used for speculative purpose. His reply was that he has no control over investments. He said that there is the Investment Board and so on and so forth. He also said that the Reliance has got Rs. 100 crores. Out of Rs. 134 crores, only one company has got Rs. 100 crores and the LIC has got some fixed criteria and they fit in that. I do not believe in what he has said. Any how, I have to believe it because he has said it. Coming to the ...*(Interruptions)*.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, for once Mr. Sahu is very honest. As a Congressman he is left with no options. ...*(Interruptions)*.

SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Sir, there was a Committee on reforms in the insurance sector. This Committee submitted its report in 1994. It is mentioned in para 6.10 of the report that management of equity is called for in the interest of insuring public. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether this management of equity is in the public interest or not.

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: I wish to assure the House categorically that the LIC is a long-term investor, it is not a speculator and that the interests of the policyholders are effectively protected by the LIC.

DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the LIC makes investments out of its premium revenue. Whatever profit the LIC earns, 95% of it goes to the policyholders. The LIC also gives bonus to the policyholders, but does not reduce the premium rates. The present premium rates were fixed on the basis of life expectancy at birth and the mortality rates of 1925-1935, some sixty years ago, when the life expectancy at birth was less than 30 years . Today, life expectancy at birth is 60.8 years, i.e., nearly 61 years. My question is: Will the LIC consider reduction of the premium rates so that even if the investment is at risk, as pointed out by Shri Rajni Ranjan Sahu, the risk-premium equation will be fairly reflected?

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: This is a suggestion for action. If not direct, it has some relevance to the main question. But this is a suggestion which I will pass on to the LIC for its examination.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, our Finance Minister, in his reply, was being very curt without revealing anything.

This private placement is a new method invented by the public institutions recently. Referring to the investments made in the Reliance group, he admitted that LIC had made a Rs. 100—crore investment by way of private placement on a premium of Rs. 375/-. And LIC is not the only institution. The UTI made an investment of Rs. 750 crores. The GIC made an investment of Rs. 50 crores. These three institutions together made an investment of Rs. 900 crores. And these three institutions have lost more than Rs. 250 crores in the last few months. The premium was Rs. 375/-. The question is, why did these institutions go in for this novel technique of all-bought-out method? How was the premium rate arrived at? I would like to know what the Finance Ministry did when all these things figured in the Press prominently. Of course, he does not lose sleep over all these things. But we do lose our sleep. The people of India do lose their sleep. He made a very interesting statement. After all, the LIC made more investments in IDBI, IFCI, ICICI, etc. True. All of them are public-

owned institutions. The LIC made the largest investment among the private institutions in the Reliance group, that too, through a questionable method of private placement. Apart from seeking answers to my questions, I would like to know from the hon. Finance Minister whether he would order a CBI enquiry into this single biggest transaction which is also the single biggest scam.

SHRI M.A. BABY: You also ask whether the CBI enquiry would cover up the whole thing.

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I do not accept the proposition that public sector financial institutions should not go through the route of private placement if, in their opinion, it is considered that that is the best thing to do taking into account the interests of the policyholders or consisted with their broad objectives. With regard to the specific transactions, I think we have to look at the investment in the totality of things. You cannot judge the LIC simply by its investment in a single year. There is such a thing as portfolio diversification and I have already mentioned that in terms of investment norms, you cannot consider 2.62% of the total equity of the LIC being invested in the Reliance group as exorbitant. And, if you bring to my notice any specific irregularities, I will ...(*Interruptions*)... What is the irregularity?

SHRI M.A. BABY: This is the irregularity. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, these three institutions have today incurred a net loss of Rs. 250/- crores.

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: I was coming to that. Sir, it is inherent in the nature of equity markets that markets fluctuate and today (*Interruptions*) Please. Let me conclude. Markets fluctuate, prices rise and prices fall. Now, the LIC is a long-term investment. They have taken into account the long-term prospects of profit. Therefore, simply because one day one particular scrip goes down in price, you cannot conclude, therefore, that the original decision to invest in that particular company is faulty. I don't buy that logic.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman, Sir. I do not interrupt our Finance Minister. Generally, he is very lucid ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA: Sir, others also have to ask questions... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Generally, he is very lucid in his presentation. Today, he is equivocal and evasive. I am sorry to say that. Mr. Chairman, Sir.. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA: It is a question-answer session. It is not a debate here. Let me also ask my question, Sir. (*Interruptions*)

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI: But Mr. Reddy has raised a very important point that there has been a net loss of Rs. 250/- crores. Now, if it is a fact, then will the Finance Minister... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, what is this? He is competent to answer the question. I don't think you should... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please allow him to answer the question. (*Interruptions*) Please sit down. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI M.A. BABY: How many Finance Ministers are there to answer this question? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, I am rising again with your permission because my questions were specific. The Finance Minister did not give the answers to my questions. I asked him to throw light on this novel, strange technique of bought-out method. I want him to explain as to how the UTI, the LIC and the GIC arrive at the exhorbitant premium rate of Rs. 375/- per share, as a consequence of which these three institutions have lost Rs. 250/- crores. Let him say 'No'. And,

if he is not satisfied, let him order an inquiry. I would also like to know as to why the Finance Minister has been a passive witness all these months.

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: Sir, I have already answered the question. I don't accept the proposition that simply because after a particular institution has invested in a share and if its price goes down, that by definition implies that that transaction is malafide. Markets behave in a particular method...(*Interruptions*) I would say that if in their judgment..

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, who are 'they'? These people are appointed by you for a temporary period and become... (*Interruptions*) I am stating here, Sir, with a full sense of responsibility, that scores of crores of rupees have changed hands by way of bribe. I do not know... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: He has made an allegation, Sir. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Minister, is there anything more to say?

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: Sir, I do not accept the allegation. I do not accept the logic of what the hon. Member is saying.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Surinder Kumar Singla.

SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA: Sir, actually this allegation-loaded question is irrelevant, I would say. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him ask his question. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, I am on a point of order ... (*Interruptions*) He has no right to comment on my question. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has a right to say. Let him say. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, if he has a question to put, let him put it to the Finance Minister. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please put your question.

SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA: I would like to know whether the financial institutions' investment in the public sector undertakings suffers the same fate or their chips have come down. I remember, when Mr. Jaipal Reddy was there, we interviewed the financial institutions, and the first question we asked was what the experience of these financial institutions was in terms of more profit with the private sector or the public sector? The answer was that the public sector was making less profit than the private placements. That is number one. The second part was what the experience of a particular group was, whether these financial institutions were making more money out of these or not. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him say. Let him put the question.

SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA: Sir, I am putting the question. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: He has no business to answer. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA: Sir, the (c) part of my question is in two parts. What was the price prevalent in the Indian capital market? There are other prices, i.e., the Euro issue price. There were two prices available. What was the price at that point of time at which the public financial institutions bought out those shares?

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: Sir, the information that is available with me is that the prices on 14th of October, 1994, before these purchases were made, were Rs. 415/- and they bought it on 17th at Rs. 385/-. But I would say that because prices fluctuate from day-to-day one should not jump to the conclusion that our public financial institutions will not be able to function autonomously, and if without a solid evidence their motivation,

their judgement, are to be questioned, I think the public sector in this country suffers from a great disability. I would respectfully submit that if any Member has any evidence of any *mala fide*, he can bring it to my notice. I will have it looked into.....*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: There is enough independence for corruption .....*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: You are condemning the public sector for non-action. Hereafter we will have a public sector where people, if they do not do anything, can rise to the top, and if the people are top class, but if they make one mistake, then you hold that the public sector is not doing well .....*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: It was not a mistake. it was a mischief.....*(Interruptions)*....Mr. Finance Minister, it was not a case of mistake. It was a mischief. .....*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Sir, I had been listening most carefully to the submission of the hon. Finance Minister. He is known for his integrity. It is not for him to defend all the actions of the public sector financial institutions. The main point is; We are not questioning the autonomy of investment. We are also not questioning the policy in general, but this is a particular case, a particular case gives rise to a serious suspicion, because the prices at which the shares were purchased were much higher than the minimum prices fixed by the SEBI. Therefore, the (a) part of my question is this: Will the Minister take into consideration the fact that the purchase prices of these shares by GIC, LIC, UTI together were higher than the minimum prices fixed by the SEBI? Is he aware of this? Sir, the (b) part of my question is this: Can he this House of such an investment being made by these public sector institutions together in one single house elsewhere? These are unprecedented. Therefore, is there any such precedent where such a massive investment was done by all the public sector together and that too in a private placement? The (c) part of my question is this: This thing led to insider trading by the unscrupulous management of the Reliance Industries. That is the Crux. This investment decision led to insider trading, led to increase in the prices of the Reliance shares in the Bombay Stock Market. Therefore, the strongest suspicion is this: Whatever might be the consideration of the investment it led to an increase in the windfall profit and windfall gain of the Reliance Industries. If it is so, will the hon. Minister look into it more closely rather than defending a particular investment of the public sector financial institutions?

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am not here defending any particular company or any particular transaction. All that I am saying is that these are the decision taken by the financial institutions in their wisdom.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: No., *(Interruptions)*

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: I am coming to each one of them. I am not aware of the minimum price which Shri Gurudas Das Gupta is referring to, which is fixed by SEBI, but I will get all the facts.

As regards insider trading practices, we have, for the first time in the last three years brought effective legislation to control insider trading practices. This is SEBI's function. I will ask SEBI to look into if and see if there is any evidence of insider trading practices in these particular cases. ....*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: There is another question ....*(Interruptions)*...I wanted the hon. Minister to tell us if such a massive investment has been done by these financial institutions together elsewhere in any other private sector, or this is the only one.

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: That does not prove either way ...*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: I want the information. I do not want any proof....*(Interruptions)*....I want only the information....*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: It is a large investment ....*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: No. Is there any such investment done elsewhere? *(Interruptions)*

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: I do not have figures about the investments in other companies. ...*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: I do not believe that merely the figure of investment makes this investment suspect. I do not accept that argument. I have checked with the UTI for example. The UTI have said that this investment made looks large in absolute amount but in terms of their guidelines on which they operate, it is within that. *(Interruptions)*....

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: That is not the answer. Why massive investment is done only in that? The point is ...*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: We want a half-an-hour discussion on this ...*(Interruptions)*

SOME HON. MEMBERS: We want a half-an-hour discussion. ...*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: A JPC enquiry should be conducted. ...*(Interruptions)*....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Give a notice. ...*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: You please agree to an enquiry by the CBI ...*(Interruptions)*....

MR. CHAIRMAN: You give a notice. Please....I now call Shri Mohammed Afzal for the next question ...*(Interruptions)*.... question. ...*(Interru*

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: He should be given extension because of this new technique of investment. ...*(Interruptions)*....Since Mr. Manmohan Singh is complimenting him I am sure of his extension! ...*(Interruptions)*....

Advertisements Given by DAVP to Newspapers

*22. SHRI MOHAMMED AFZAL alias MEEM AFZAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state the number of advertisements given by the DAVP to Big, Medium and Small newspapers during the period 1994-95?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO): during the period 1994-95, DAVP issued 1,64,669 insertions of advertisements to various newspapers/ periodicals. The share of big, medium and small newspapers is as under:

Big	—	48,156
Medium	—	56.517
Small	—	59,996
TOTAL :		1,64,669

श्री मोहम्मद अफज़ल उर्फ मीम अफज़ल: सर, मैं वज़ीर-ए-मोहतरम के जवाब की रोशनी में यह जानना चाहता हूं कि बड़े, दरिम्यानी और छोटे अखबारात् को जो इश्तहारात् दिए गए हैं उसका नम्बर तो आपने बता दिया, यह बताने की तकलीफ और गवारा करें कि इन बड़े, छोटे और दरिम्यानी अखबारों में अंग्रेजी अखबारों की तादाद कितनी है, हिन्दी अखबारों की तादाद कितनी है और हिन्दुस्तान की जो दीगर 18 ज़बानों में डी॰ए॰वी॰पी॰ इश्तहार देता है, उनकी तादाद कितनी है और इन अलग-अलग ज़बानों में कितना-कितना बजट 1994-95 में दिया गया है? अगर रुपए में बता सके तो वह बता दें और अगर परसेंट में बता सके तो ज्यादा अच्छा होगा ताकि क्लीअर पोजीशन पता लग जाए।